



Authoritative Parenting for Neurodivergent Kids



Warm connection. Clear limits. Skill-building support.

Neurodivergent children often do best when adults offer both emotional safety and clear expectations. The goal is not perfect behavior. The goal is to help children feel supported while building the skills they need.

1



Start with Connection

- **Praise what's working** — Name specific positive behaviors you want to see again.
- **Validate feelings** — “You’re disappointed, and it’s still time to go.”
- **Spend one-on-one time** — Even 5–10 minutes of child-led connection can help.
- **Model repair** — “I’m sorry I yelled. I’m going to try again.”
- **Teach self-care** — Sleep, food, movement, quiet time, and sensory breaks matter.

2



Make Expectations Clear

- **Use simple directions** — Say exactly what to do: “Put the blocks in the bin.”
- **Offer limited choices** — “Shoes first or jacket first?”
- **Use when-then language** — “When pajamas are on, then we can read.”
- **Create routines** — Visual schedules, checklists, and predictable rhythms reduce stress.
- **Give transition warnings** — Use timers, countdowns, and “last turn” reminders.

3



Build Skills, Not Shame

- **Teach coping strategies** — Practice breaks, breathing, headphones, or asking for help when calm.
- **Teach problem-solving scripts** — “I feel ____. I need ____. Can we make a plan?”
- **Break tasks into steps** — Large tasks often need scaffolding, not more pressure.
- **Ignore minor behaviors when safe** — Give attention to the behavior you want to grow.
- **Use consequences sparingly** — Consequences should be calm, related, and focused on learning.



Remember

- ♥ You can be warm and still have limits.
- ♥ You can validate feelings and still say no.
- ♥ You can support your child and still expect growth.
- ♥ You can repair after hard moments and keep going.

